

# Office Action Summary

Application No.  
09/115,764

Applica.

REASONER

Examiner  
Luong

Art Unit  
3682



-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12/26/02
- 2a) ☒ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 4-29 and 37-40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above, claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 4-29 and 37-40 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.  
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some\* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Vinh T. Luong  
Primary Examiner

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☒ Other: Exhibits 1 & 2 and PTO Memorandum

1. The Amendment and Response filed on December 26, 2002 has been entered.
2. The Second Supplemental Reissue Declaration filed on December 26, 2002 has been accepted.
3. The proposed drawing correction and/or the proposed substitute sheets of drawings, filed on December 26, 2002 have been approved
4. Claims 4-29 and 37-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 251 as being an improper recapture of broadened claimed subject matter surrendered in the application for the patent upon which the present reissue is based. See *Hester Industries, Inc. v. Stein, Inc.*, 142 F.3d 1472, 46 USPQ2d 1641 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Clement*, 131 F.3d 1464, 45 USPQ2d 1161 (Fed. Cir. 1997); *Ball Corp. v. United States*, 729 F.2d 1429, 1436, 221 USPQ 289, 295 (Fed. Cir. 1984). A broadening aspect is present in the reissue, which was not present in the application for patent. The record of the application for the patent shows that the broadening aspect (in the reissue) relates to subject matter that applicant previously surrendered during the prosecution of the application. Accordingly, the narrow scope of the claims in the patent was not an error within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. 251, and the broader scope surrendered in the application for the patent cannot be recaptured by the filing of the present reissue application.

It is well settled that a reissue application is not permitted to "recapture" claimed subject matter *deliberately* canceled in the original application. *In re Clement*, 45 USPQ 1161 (CAFC 1997). See MPEP 1412.02. Note also that in *Hester Industries, Inc. v. Stein, Inc.*, 46 USPQ2d 1641 (CAFC 1998), the Court held that the recapture rule can be triggered by argument alone *even where there was no claim change made*. MPEP 1412.02.

In the instant case, a review of the prosecution history of applicant's original application SN # 08/573,561 shows that in the Amendment filed on January 8, 1997, applicant explicitly argued that "Claim 1 has been amended to include the coil spring *in tension between* the adjustment components (18, 20) to bias the components together to shorten the overall length of the first and second conduit sections (14, 16). The coil spring in tension is structure and none of the prior art suggest this combination." The spring in tension is why the claims were allowed in the parent application. To remove this limitation in the reissue claims is recapture. MPEP 1412.02 *supra*.

5. Applicant's arguments filed December 26, 2002 (Paper No. 31) have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

#### **Objection to the Claims**

The objection to the claims is withdrawn in view of applicant's submission of Claim Appendix

#### **Withdrawn Claims**

The cancellation of method claims 30-36 renders the issue of withdrawn claims to be moot.

#### **Reissue Oath/Declaration**

The rejection of the claims based on defective oath/declaration is withdrawn in view of applicant's submission of Second Supplemental Reissue Declaration.

#### **Litigation Status**

Applicant's updated information regarding the litigation status is acknowledged.

### **Objection to the Drawings**

The objection to the drawings is withdrawn in view of applicant's submission of drawing correction.

### **Recapture Rejection**

Applicant contends that the spring in the embodiment illustrated in the application is NOT in "tension," it is in compression, thus, it cannot be recapture to correct an obvious error.

In the instant case, a review of the prosecution history of applicant's original application SN # 08/573,561 shows that in the Amendment filed on January 8, 1997, applicant explicitly argued that "Claim 1 has been amended to include the coil spring *in tension between* the adjustment components (18, 20) to bias the components together to shorten the overall length of the first and second conduit sections (14, 16). The coil spring in tension is structure and none of the prior art suggest this combination." The spring in tension is why the claims were allowed in the parent application. To remove this limitation in the reissue claims is recapture. MPEP 1412.02 *supra*. See also, e.g., "CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THAT SUBJECT MATTER HAS BEEN SURRENDERED" on pages 2 and 3, and Examples 1 and 2 on pages 6-8 of PTO Memorandum dated September 21, 1999 attached.

### **Decision by the Board of Patent Appeals & Interferences**

The examiner agrees that the Board found that the references teach lengthening the overall length rather than shorten it as required by the appealed claims. However, the Board did not make the recapture rejection for the removal of the term "in tension." Therefore, the Board has not considered the recapture issue.

*Res Judicata*

Applicant asserts that MPEP 707.07(g) sets forth that piecemeal prosecution should be avoided as much as possible. Thus, since the issue of recapture should have been raised in the rejection before the appeal to the Board, the examiner should be estopped from raising this issue on the ground of *res judicata* and against the mandate of the MPEP.

The examiner respectfully submits that the MPEP states that piecemeal prosecution *should be avoided as much as possible*. In other words, MPEP recognizes that there may be a situation that piece meal prosecution is regrettably unavoidable or unintentional such as this case.

With respect to applicant's collateral *estoppel* and *res judicata* arguments, the examiner is mindful that the Courts have consistently held that the only effect of a prior decision by the Court is to govern further proceeding in the PTO. The Board in *Ex parte Webb*, 30 USPQ2d 1064, 1067 (BPAI 1993) has pointed out that "There is nothing unusual about an examiner changing his viewpoint as to the patentability of a claim as the prosecution progresses, and, so long as the rules of the PTO are duly complied, with, appellant has no ground for complaint because of the change in view. Thus, the PTO has the jurisdiction and authority to reopen prosecution here at issue on a new rational." See also footnote 4 in *In re Brown and Portillo, Inc.*, 5 USPQ2d 1381, 1382 (BPAI 1987). Even when the patents have been issued, the Office is not estopped from determining whether or not a substantial new question of patentability is raised by patents or printed publications which have been discovered by the Commissioner or which have been brought to the Commissioner's attention. 37 CFR 1.520 and MPEP 2239 *et seq.*

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In addition, the examiner respectfully points out that it is well known in administrative law that the Courts have some reluctant to permit prior judgments to bind the government to quite the same degree as they bind other private litigants. The rationalization for this is fully explained by the Supreme Court in *United States v. Mendoza*, 464 US 154 (1984). See *Administrative Law, Cases and Materials*, Ronald A. Cass and Collin S. Diver, Little, Brown and Company, 1987, page 257 *et seq.* More important, the party asserting collateral estoppel has the burden of showing that issues are identical and that they were determined on the merits in the first proceeding. *Administrative Law Text*, Kenneth Culp Davis, Third Edition, West Publishing Co., 1972, page 371. In this case, the recapture rejection had not been considered by the Board, thus, estoppel doctrine is apparently not applicable.

#### **Recapture**

First, applicant asserts that applicant's review of the file history of the parent application shows that the patentability of the parent application *had nothing to do* with the term "in tension."

The examiner respectfully submits Exhibit # 1 which is a copy of the first Office action on December 2, 1996 of the parent application, and Exhibit # 2 which is a copy of applicant's Amendment filed on January 8, 1997 in response to the first Office action of the parent application. Exhibit # 2 shows that applicant emphasized the added limitation "in tension" in amended claim 1 in order to overcome the rejection based on prior art US Patent No. 5,039,138 issued to Dickirson. In other words, applicant's amendment under 37 CFR 1.111 knowingly or intentionally added the specific limitation "in tension" in order to obtain the allowance over the prior art of record as evidenced by applicant's own statement below:

“Claim 1 has been amended to include the coil spring and that it is in tension between the adjustment components (18, 20) to bias the components together to shorten the overall length of the first and second conduit sections (14, 16). *The coil spring in tension is structure and none of the prior art suggest this combination. The patent to Dickirson'138 is not remotely suggestive of the subject invention* because it merely discloses a snap-together assembly which is held together by nut 242 having flexible projection 244 which dig into the inner component.”  
(Italic for emphasis).

Second, applicant avers that the removal of the term “in tension” does not constitute recapture, but corrects an obvious error, which is inaccurate as applied to the illustrated embodiment.

The examiner respectfully submits that the error in this case is *not* an obvious error since the Office is not equipped as a laboratory with testing instruments, *etc.* in order to test and physically compare applicant's claimed device and prior art devices to ascertain the veracity of applicant's statement that “the coil spring in tension is structure and none of the prior art suggest this combination.” See *In re Brown*, 173 USPQ 685, 688 (CCPA 1972) and MPEP 2113. The examiner is mindful that “an essential purpose of patent examination is to fashion claims that are *precise, clear, correct, and unambiguous*. Only in this way can uncertainties of claim scope be

removed, as much as possible, during the administrative process.” *In re Zletz* at 1322 in 13 USPQ2d 1320 (CAFC 1989). Consequently, the examiner gave full faith and credit to applicant’s statements in the amendment. The examiner fully evaluated and considered applicant’s functional limitation “in tension” together with all other words in applicant’s amended claims in order to reach the decision of allowance of the parent application in accordance with MPEP 2173.05(g) and 2143.03.

Applicant now contends that the specification of the parent application *preferably* discusses the spring being in compression. Nevertheless, the examiner is mindful that the term “*preferably*” denotes a desire rather than a requirement, *i.e.*, the spring is not structurally required to be in compression. More important, although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993). Therefore, even though applicant’s specification describes the compression, however, the name of the game is the claims, *a fortiori*, the term “in tension” is the major reason for allowance of the parent case.

Third, applicant avers that recapture cannot apply to a term in the claims where that term should have been objected to as not readable upon the embodiment shown in the drawings.

The examiner respectfully points out that, based on applicant’s drawings, applicant’s spring can be in tension or compression, thus, there was no apparent reason to object to applicant’s drawings or claims.

Fourth, the examiner has applied two step test for finding recapture in accordance with MPEP. The first step shows that applicant plainly broadens the issue claims by deletion of the specific functional limitation “in tension.” The second step of reviewing the parent application



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shows that that functional limitation was expressly argued to overcome the prior art of record and the art used in the rejection in the parent case, thus, this is an attempt to recapture as set forth by the Office Memorandum and MPEP.

Finally, applicant relies on applicant's Second Supplemental Reissue Declaration. The examiner respectfully submits that the Second Supplemental does not refute the evidence presented in the prosecution history of parent application that applicant surrendered the limitation "in tension" and attempted to recapture it in the instant reissue application as set forth by legal precedents cited in PTO Memorandum and MPEP Chapter 1400.

For the reasons set forth above, the recapture rejection is maintained.

6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Examiner Luong whose telephone number is (703) 308-3221.

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The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 8:30 AM EST to 7:00 PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Bucci, can be reached on (703) 308-3668. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 305-7687. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.

Luong

January 24, 2003

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vinh T. Luong', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Vinh T. Luong  
Primary Examiner



MEMORANDUM

Date: September 21, 1999

To: Patent Examining Corps

From:   
Stephen G. Kunin  
Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Patent Policy and Projects

Subject: Applying the Recapture Rule to Reissue Applications

The following material provides guidance to the patent examining corps in applying the recapture rule to reissue applications. The substance of the material will be incorporated into Chapter 1400 of the MPEP in the next revision.

**RECAPTURE OF SURRENDERED SUBJECT MATTER**

A reissue will not be granted to "recapture" claimed subject matter which was surrendered in an application to obtain the original patent- *Hester Industries, Inc. v. Stein, Inc.*, 142 F.3d 1472, 46 USPQ2d 1641 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Clement*, 131 F.3d 1464, 45 USPQ2d 1161 (Fed. Cir. 1997); *Ball Corp. v. United States*, 729 F.2d 1429, 1436, 221 USPQ 289, 295 (Fed. Cir. 1984); *In re Wadlinger*, 496 F.2d 1200, 181 USPQ 826 (CCPA 1974); *In re Richman*, 409 F.2d 269, 276, 161 USPQ 359, 363-364 (CCPA 1969); *In re Willingham*, 282 F.2d 353, 127 USPQ 211 (CCPA 1960).

**TWO STEP TEST FOR RECAPTURE:**

In *Clement*, 131 F.3d at 1468-69, 45 USPQ2d at 1164, the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit set forth guidance for recapture as follows:

The first step in applying the recapture rule is to determine whether and in what aspect the reissue claims are broader than the patent claims. For example, a reissue claim that deletes a limitation or element from the patent claims is broader in that limitation's aspect.... Under *Mentor [Mentor Corp. v. Coloplast, Inc.]*, 998 F.2d 992, 994, 27 USPQ2d 1521, 1524 (Fed. Cir. 1993)], courts must determine in which aspects the reissue claim is broader, which includes broadening as a result of an omitted limitation....

The second step is to determine whether the broader aspects of the reissue claims relate to surrendered subject matter. To determine whether an

applicant surrendered particular subject matter, we look to the prosecution history for arguments and changes to the claims made in an effort to overcome a prior art rejection. See *Mentor*, 998 F.2d at 995-96, 27 USPQ2d at 1524-25; *Ball Corp. v. United States*, 729 F.2d 1429, 1436, 221 USPQ 289, 294-95 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

In every reissue application, the examiner must first review each claim for the presence of broadening, as compared with the scope of the claims of the patent to be reissued. A reissue claim is broadened where some limitation of the patent claims is no longer required in the reissue claim; see MPEP § 1412.03 for guidance as to the nature of a "broadening claim."

Where a claim in a reissue application is in fact broadened, the examiner must next determine whether the broader aspects of that reissue claim relate to subject matter that applicant previously surrendered during the prosecution of the original application (which became the patent to be reissued). Each limitation of the patent claims, which is omitted or broadened in the reissue claim, must be reviewed for this determination.

It is noted that the facts in *Hester* and *Clement* (and the other cases cited above) were directed to subject matter surrendered in response to art rejections. The question as to whether other rejections may also give rise to recapture, however, remains unsettled in the case law.

#### **CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THAT SUBJECT MATTER HAS BEEN SURRENDERED:**

If the limitation now being omitted or broadened in the present reissue was originally presented/argued/stated in the original application to make the claims allowable over a rejection or objection made in the original application, the omitted limitation relates to subject matter previously surrendered by applicant, and impermissible recapture exists.

The examiner should review the prosecution history of the original application file (of the patent to be reissued) for recapture. The prosecution history includes the rejections and applicant's arguments made therein. The record of the original application must show that the broadening aspect (the omitted/broadened limitation(s)) relates to subject matter that applicant previously surrendered. For example:

1) A limitation of the patent claims is omitted in the reissue claims. This omission provides a broadening aspect in the reissue claims, as compared to the claims of the patent. The omitted limitation was originally argued in the original application to make the application claims allowable over a rejection or objection made in the application. Thus, the omitted limitation relates to subject matter previously surrendered, in the original application.

Note: The argument that the claim limitation defined over the rejection must have been specific as to the limitation; rather than a general statement regarding the claims

as a whole. In other words, a general "boiler plate" sentence will not be sufficient to establish recapture. An example of one such "boiler plate" sentence is:

"In closing, it is argued that the limitations of claims 1-7 distinguish the claims from the teachings of the prior art, and claims 1-7 are thus patentable."

This general "argument" will not, by itself, be sufficient to establish surrender and recapture.

2) The limitation omitted in the reissue was added in the original application claims for the purpose of making the claims allowable over a rejection or objection made in the application. Even though applicant made no argument on the record that the limitation was added to obviate the rejection, the nature of the addition to the claim can show that the limitation was added in direct reply to the rejection. This too will establish the omitted limitation as relating to subject matter previously surrendered. To illustrate this, note the following example:

The original application claims recite limitations A+B+C, and the Office action rejection combines two references to show A+B+C. In the amendment replying to the Office action, applicant adds limitation D to A+B+C in the claims, but makes no argument as to that addition. The examiner then allows the claims. Even though there is no argument as to the addition of limitation D, it must be presumed that the D limitation was added to obviate the rejection. The subsequent deletion of (omission of) limitation D in the reissue claims would be presumed to be a broadening in an aspect of the reissue claims related to surrendered subject matter.

3) The limitation A omitted in the reissue claims was present in the claims of the original application. The examiner's reasons for allowance in the original application stated that it was that limitation A which distinguished over a potential combination of references X and Y. Applicant did not present on the record a counter statement or comment as to the examiner's reasons for allowance, and permitted the claims to issue. The omitted limitation is thus established as relating to subject matter previously surrendered.

#### **ARGUMENT (WITHOUT AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS) IN THE ORIGINAL APPLICATION MAY BE SUFFICIENT TO ESTABLISH RECAPTURE:**

In *Clement*, the recapture was directed to subject matter surrendered in the original application by changes made to the claims (i.e., amendment of the claims) in an effort to overcome a prior art rejection. The *Clement* Court, however, also stated that "[t]o determine whether an applicant surrendered particular subject matter, we look to the prosecution history for arguments and changes to the claims made in an effort to overcome a prior art rejection." [Emphasis added] 131 F.3d at 1469, 45 USPQ2d at 1164. This statement in *Clement* was subsequently discussed in *Hester Industries, Inc. v. Stein, Inc.*, *supra*, where the Court observed that surrender of claimed subject matter may occur by arguments made during the prosecution of the original patent application even where there was no claim change made. The Court in *Hester* held that the surrender which forms the basis for impermissible recapture "can occur

through arguments alone." 142 F.3d at 1482, 46 USPQ2d at 1649. Accordingly, where claims are broadened in a reissue application, the examiner should review the prosecution history of the original patent file for recapture, even where the claims were never amended during the prosecution of the application which resulted in the patent.

#### **REISSUE CLAIMS ARE SAME OR BROADER IN SCOPE IN ALL ASPECTS:**

The recapture rule bars the patentee from acquiring through reissue claims that are, in all aspects, of the same scope as, or are broader in scope than, those claims canceled from the original application to obtain a patent. *Ball*, 729 F.2d at 1436, 221 USPQ at 295.

#### **REISSUE CLAIMS ARE NARROWER IN SCOPE IN ALL ASPECTS:**

The patentee is free to acquire, through reissue, claims that are narrower in scope in all aspects than claims canceled from the original application to obtain a patent. If the reissue claims are narrower than the claims canceled from the original application, yet broader than the original patent claims, reissue must be sought within 2 years after the grant of the original patent. *Ball*, 729 F.2d at 1436, 221 USPQ at 295. See MPEP § 1412.03 as to broadening claims.

#### **REISSUE CLAIMS ARE BROADER IN SOME ASPECTS, BUT NARROWER IN OTHERS:**

Reissue claims that are broader in certain aspects and narrower in others *vis-à-vis* claims canceled from the original application to obtain a patent may avoid the effect of the recapture rule if the claims are broader in a way that does not attempt to reclaim what was surrendered earlier. *Mentor Corp. v. Coloplast, Inc.*, 998 F.2d 992, 994, 27 USPQ2d 1521, 1525 (Fed. Cir. 1993). "[I]f the reissue claim is as broad as or broader in an aspect germane to a prior art rejection, but narrower in another aspect completely unrelated to the rejection, the recapture rule bars the claim; [] if the reissue claim is narrower in an aspect germane to [a] prior art rejection, and broader in an aspect unrelated to the rejection, the recapture rule does not bar the claim, but other rejections are possible." *Clement*, 131 F.3d at 1470, 45 USPQ2d at 1165.

If the broadening aspect of the reissue claim relates to subject matter previously surrendered, the examiner must determine whether the newly added narrowing limitation in the reissue claim modifies the claim such that the scope of the claim no longer results in a recapture of the surrendered subject matter. If the narrowing limitation modifies the claim in such a manner that the scope of the claim no longer results in a recapture of the surrendered subject matter, then there is no recapture. In this situation, even though a rejection based on recapture is not made, the examiner should make of record the reason(s) why, as a result of the narrowing limitation, there is no recapture.

#### **REISSUE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF 35 U.S.C. 103(b):**

A patentee may file a reissue application to permit consideration of process claims which qualify for 35 U.S.C. 103(b) treatment if a patent is granted on an application entitled to the benefit of 35 U.S.C. 103(b), without an election having been made as a result of error without deceptive intent. See MPEP § 706.02(n). **This is not to be considered a recapture.** The addition of process claims, however, will generally be considered to be a *broadening* of the invention (*Ex Parte Wikdahl*, 10 USPQ2d 1546 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1989)), and such addition must be applied for within two years of the grant of the original patent. See also MPEP § 1412.03 as to broadened claims.

#### **REISSUE FOR ARTICLE CLAIMS WHICH ARE FUNCTIONAL DESCRIPTIVE MATERIAL STORED ON A COMPUTER-READABLE MEDIUM:**

A patentee may file a reissue application to permit consideration of article of manufacture claims which are functional descriptive material stored on a computer-readable medium, where these article claims correspond to the process or machine claims which have been patented. The error in not presenting claims to this statutory category of invention (the "article" claims) must have been made as a result of error without deceptive intent. The addition of these "article" claims will generally be considered to be a *broadening* of the invention (*Ex Parte Wikdahl*, 10 USPQ2d 1546 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1989)), and such addition must be applied for within two years of the grant of the original patent. See also MPEP § 1412.03 as to broadened claims.

#### **REJECTION BASED UPON RECAPTURE:**

Reissue claims which recapture surrendered subject matter should be rejected using form paragraph 14.17 as follows. < Note: the MPEFP has not yet been revised to include this version of 14.17 >

##### **¶ 14.17 Rejection, 35 U.S.C. 251, Recapture**

Claim [1] rejected under 35 U.S.C. 251 as being an improper recapture of broadened claimed subject matter surrendered in the application for the patent upon which the present reissue is based. See *Hester Industries, Inc. v. Stein, Inc.*, 142 F.3d 1472, 46 USPQ2d 1641 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Clement*, 131 F.3d 1464, 45 USPQ2d 1161 (Fed. Cir. 1997); *Ball Corp. v. United States*, 729 F.2d 1429, 1436, 221 USPQ 289, 295 (Fed. Cir. 1984). A broadening aspect is present in the reissue which was not present in the application for patent. The record of the application for the patent shows that the broadening aspect (in the reissue) relates to subject matter that applicant previously surrendered during the prosecution of the application. Accordingly, the narrow scope of the claims in the patent was not an error within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. 251, and the broader scope surrendered in the application for the patent cannot be recaptured by the filing of the present reissue application.

[2]

**Examiner Note:** In bracket 2, the examiner should explain the specifics of why recapture exists, including an identification of the omitted/broadened claim limitations in the reissue which provide the "broadening aspect" to the claim(s), and where in the

original application the narrowed claim scope was presented/argued to obviate a rejection/objection. See MPEP 1412.02.

### **EXAMPLES:**

The following examples illustrate recurring fact situations presenting recapture issues and their resolution. It should be noted that each recapture issue should be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Bread compositions and bread making are used in the examples for ease of comparison, and so that the reader need not adjust to a very different fact pattern for different examples.

#### **Example 1- Recapture based on claim limitations added in original application to overcome prior art:**

##### Original prosecution:

An application was filed containing only one claim reciting:

Claim 1: A bread containing chocolate, pepper, and tomatoes, which provide a unique taste to the bread.

During the original prosecution, the examiner issued an Office action rejecting claim 1 based upon references X and Y which together teach a bread having chocolate, pepper, and tomatoes.

In an amendment replying to the Office action, applicant added (from the specification) "orange peels" to claim 1 and argued that the amendment overcame the rejection based on references X and Y. The claim, as amended, recited:

Claim 1 (once amended): A bread containing chocolate, pepper, tomatoes and orange peels, which provide a unique taste to the bread.

The examiner allowed the claim and passed the application to issue. A patent then issued on the application.

##### Reissue proceedings:

In a reissue application, new claim 2 is presented for a bread containing chocolate, pepper, and tomatoes, which provide a unique taste to the bread. Because of market place developments which now show the need to claim a bread without "orange peels," new claim 2 does not include the limitation of "orange peels" that defined over references X and Y in the original application.

The reissue oath points out that the original presentation (in the patent) of only a claim which included "orange peels" was "error" upon which reissue may be based; thus, claim 2 which omits "orange peels" is added in the reissue. The oath points out that the error arose because applicant's attorney incorrectly assumed that the



manufacture of the bread without orange peels was not commercially feasible due to the consistency of the resulting bread.

A "commercial success" affidavit is newly presented in the reissue application to show that claim 2 is patentable over references X and Y even without "orange peels," and the examiner deems the affidavit to be persuasive. Accordingly, the examiner determines that claim 2 defines over references X and Y and the remainder of the art.

Resolution of the recapture issue:

Claim 2 would be barred by recapture. The limitation omitted in the reissue is "orange peels." This provides a broadening aspect to the reissue claim that was clearly argued in the original application to overcome the rejection based on references X and Y. Thus, omission of "orange peels" is related to subject matter surrendered in the original application. This is the fundamental case of recapture. Since recapture exists, claim 2 should be rejected under 35 U.S.C. 251 based on recapture in the manner set forth above under the heading "Rejection based upon recapture:".

In this example, applicant narrowed the claims for the purpose of obtaining allowance in the original prosecution, and applicant is now precluded from recapturing subject matter previously surrendered. See also *Mentor Corp. v. Coloplast, Inc.*, 998 F.2d 992, 994, 27 USPQ2d 1521, 1524 (Fed. Cir. 1993) with respect to this example. (In *Mentor*, there were narrowing limitations added to the reissue claims that did not serve to materially narrow the claims in a manner effective to avoid a recapture bar; however, those narrowing limitations are not included in this example of fundamental recapture.)

**Example 2- Recapture based upon applicant's statement made during the original prosecution:**

Original prosecution:

An application was filed containing only one claim reciting:

Claim 1: A bread baking oven for baking bread using only steam comprising:

a chamber;

means passing a continuously running conveyor belt through the chamber to expose bread in the chamber only to steam as the sole baking medium;

and means providing two sources of steam to bake the bread:

one being a source of steam comprising a pool of water within the chamber with heating means for boiling the water to create steam,

and the other a steam generator supplying supplemental steam into the chamber to maintain the atmosphere, together with the first steam source, at near 100% humidity, 100 degrees C. and a pressure above atmospheric.

During the prosecution of the original patent, the examiner repeatedly rejected claim 1 based upon prior art references X and Y which together teach the claimed oven. Applicant repeatedly replied with the argument that **baking solely with steam** and the **two sources of steam** limitations distinguished claim 1 from references X and Y, and that each of these limitations are critical to patentability. Applicant did not amend the claim, and ultimately applicant appealed to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences. In the appeal, applicant again relied upon the argument of baking solely with steam and the two sources of steam. The Board reversed the examiner, and the examiner passed the application to issue. A patent issued on the application.

Reissue proceedings:

In a reissue application, claim 2 is newly presented containing the same language as in claim 1 except that it does not contain the requirement that **the baking be solely with steam**, and does not require that the steam be generated via **two sources of steam**.

The reissue oath points out that the presentation of only a claim which included these two limitations was "error" by the attorney in failing to recognize the full scope of the invention.

During the prosecution of the reissue application, the examiner is persuaded that claim 2 defines over the prior art.

Resolution of the recapture issue:

**Claim 2 is barred by recapture.**

In this example, reissue claim 2 is broader than patent claim 1 by the omission of two limitations, **baking solely with steam** and **steam generation via two sources of steam**. Applicant surrendered the claim scope for a bread baking apparatus which omits these two limitations because applicant repeatedly argued during prosecution of the original application (including on appeal) that these two limitations distinguished original claim 1 from references X and Y and that each of the limitations was critical to patentability. These repeated arguments constitute an admission by applicant that the two limitations were necessary to overcome the prior art. Thus, claim 2 is broader than the original application claim in an aspect relevant to prior art rejection and related to the surrendered subject matter. Accordingly, impermissible recapture exists, and claim 2 should be rejected under 35 U.S.C. 251, based upon recapture.

Impermissible recapture exists in this example even though applicant never amended the original application claim to add **baking solely with steam** and **steam generation via two sources of steam**; the two limitations were present in the originally presented claim of the application. Subject matter can be surrendered by way of arguments *or* by claim amendment made during the prosecution of the original patent application. In the present example, applicant's argument provided the basis for a finding of surrender of subject matter.

A similar situation arose in *Hester Industries, Inc. v. Stein, Inc.*, 142 F.3d 1472, 46 USPQ2d 1641 (Fed. Cir. 1998). In *Hester*, however, the reissue claims also included narrowing limitations added via the reissue that did not serve to materially narrow the claims in a manner effective to avoid a recapture bar; those limitations are not included (presented) in this example, since they are not directed to the focus of the example.

**Example 3- Reissue broadens, but the broadening is not related to the prior art rejection-No recapture:**

Original prosecution:

As in Example 1, an application was filed containing only one claim reciting:

Claim 1: A bread containing chocolate, pepper, and tomatoes, which provide a unique taste to the bread.

During the prosecution, the examiner issued an Office action rejecting claim 1 based upon references X and Y which together teach a bread having chocolate, pepper, and tomatoes.

In an amendment replying to the Office action, applicant added (from the specification) "orange peels" to claim 1 and argued that this amendment overcame the rejection based on references X and Y, in that it provided a sweetness to the bread. The amended claim recited:

Claim 1 (once amended): A bread containing chocolate, pepper, tomatoes and orange peels, which provide a unique taste to the bread.

The examiner allowed the claim and passed the application to issue. A patent issued on the application.

Reissue proceedings:

In a reissue application, new claim 2 is presented.

Claim 2: A bread containing chocolate, tomatoes and orange peels, which provide a unique taste to the bread.

New claim 2 does not include the "pepper" of claim 1 of the original application. The reissue oath points out that limiting the bread to a pepper-containing bread (in the patent) was "error" upon which reissue may be based; thus, claim 2 which omits "pepper" is added in the reissue application. The oath points out that the error arose because applicant's attorney incorrectly assumed that bread with pepper was the only thing applicant was interested in producing.

The examiner determines that claim 2 defines over references X and Y and the remainder of the art, even without the pepper limitation.

Resolution of the recapture issue:

**Claim 2 would be not barred by recapture.** The limitation omitted in the reissue is "pepper." This provides a broadening aspect to the reissue claim that was never argued in the original application to overcome the rejection based on references X and Y. Thus, omission of "pepper" is not related to subject matter surrendered in the original application; a bread omitting pepper was never surrendered.

Regarding this example, see *Ball Corp. v. United States*, 729 F.2d 1429, 1436, 221 USPQ 289, 295 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

**Example 4(a)- Reissue narrows & broadens, where the broadening is related to the prior art rejection and the narrowing is not-Yes recapture:**

Original prosecution:

As in Examples 1 and 3, an application is filed containing only one claim reciting:

**Claim 1:** A bread containing chocolate, pepper, and tomatoes, which provide a unique taste to the bread.

During the prosecution, the examiner issues an Office action rejecting claim 1 based upon references X and Y which together teach a bread having chocolate, pepper, and tomatoes.

In an amendment replying to the Office action, applicant added (from the specification) "orange peels" to claim 1 and argued that the amendment overcame the rejection based on references X and Y. The claim now recites:

**Claim 1 (once amended):** A bread containing chocolate, pepper, tomatoes and orange peels, which provide a unique taste to the bread.

The examiner allowed the claim and passed the application to issue. A patent issued on the application.

Reissue proceedings:

In a reissue application, a new claim (i.e., claim 2) is presented for a bread containing chocolate, **diced green bell peppers** and tomatoes, which provide a unique taste to the bread. This reissue claim does not contain the "orange peels" that defined over references X and Y in the application. It does, however, require that the pepper be "diced green bell peppers" (unlike the case of example 1). The "diced green bell" limitation of the "pepper" is a limitation which was overlooked in the prosecution of the patent, and as such, constitutes "error" upon which reissue may be based. The examiner determines that newly presented claim 2 defines over references X and Y and the remainder of the art, based upon the "diced green bell peppers".

Resolution of the recapture issue:

**Claim 2 would be barred by recapture.** The limitation omitted in the reissue is "orange peels." This provides a broadening aspect to the reissue claim that was clearly

argued in the original application to overcome the rejection based on references X and Y. Thus, omission of "orange peels" is related to subject matter surrendered in the original application. A narrowing limitation was also provided in reissue claim 2; i.e., a limitation that limits the "pepper" to "diced green bell peppers." This narrowing limitation, however, is not at all related to the "orange peels" and the manner in which it defined over the art. Since the narrowing is not related to the prior art rejection and not related to the subject matter surrendered in the original application (omission of orange peels), recapture exists and claim 2 should be rejected under 35 U.S.C. 251.

See *In re Clement*, 131 F.3d 1464, 45 USPQ2d 1161 (Fed. Cir. 1997).

**Example 4(b)- Reissue narrows & broadens where both are related to prior art rejections (different ones)-Yes recapture:**

Original prosecution:

An application was filed containing only one claim reciting:

Claim 1: A method of treating bread dough to remove seed contaminants contained therein, which comprises:

- (a) forming a flowing dough;
- (b) irradiating the dough to soften the seeds at a temperature above room temperature; and
- (c) adhering the softened seeds to a membrane at a temperature below room temperature and then recovering the dough.

During the prosecution, the examiner issued an Office action rejecting claim 1 based upon references X and Y which together teach steps (a)-(c). Claim 1 was also rejected based upon reference Z which teaches steps (a)-(c) in a somewhat different manner (than references X and Y do).

In an amendment replying to the action, applicant added "101 and 115° C." to step (b) of claim 1, and 5-15° C. to step (c), in place of "a temperature above room temperature" and "a temperature below room temperature," respectively. Applicant argued that the temperature additions define the claim over references X and Y. Applicant also added new step (d) to claim 1, reciting the collecting of the seed-free dough while mixing and irradiating it. Applicant argued this addition to define the claim over reference Z.

The claim now recites:

Claim 1 (once amended): A method of treating a bread dough to remove seed contaminants contained therein, which comprises:

- (a) forming a flowing dough at room temperature;

(b) irradiating the dough to soften the seeds while heating the dough to between 101 and 115° C.;

(c) adhering the softened seeds to a membrane at a temperature of 5-15° C. and then recovering the dough; and

(d) collecting the seed-free dough while mixing and irradiating the dough.

The examiner allowed the claim and passed the application to issue; a patent then issued on the application.

Reissue proceedings:

In a reissue application, claim 2 is now presented containing the same language as in claim 1 except that it does not contain the "101 and 115° C." and 5-15° C." limitations that defined over references X and Y in the application. Added to claim 2 step (d) is the limitation "in a vacuum," so that step (d) now recites-

(d) collecting the seed-free dough in a vacuum while mixing and irradiating the dough.

The reissue oath points out that the presentation (in the patent) of only a claim which included the two temperature limitations was "error" upon which reissue may be based; thus, claim 2 which is free of the temperature limitations is added in the reissue. The reissue oath additionally points out that "in a vacuum" is added because it further defines over reference Z.

The examiner determines that claim 2 defines over references X, Y and Z and the remainder of the art.

Resolution of the recapture issue:

**Claim 2 would be barred by recapture:**

In this example, reissue claim 2 is both broader and narrower than patent claim 1 in areas relevant to the prior art rejections.

Comparing reissue claim 2 with patent claim 1, claim 2 is narrower in one aspect, namely, the step (d) dough collection "in a vacuum." This narrowing relates to a prior art rejection because, during the prosecution of the patent, applicant added step (d) to overcome reference Z.

Reissue claim 2 is broader in that it eliminates the "101 and 115° C." and 5-15° C." temperature limitations. This provides a broadening aspect to the reissue claim to exclude the temperature limitations that were clearly argued in the original application to overcome the rejection based on references X and Y.

Reissue claim 2 is broader in a manner *directly pertinent to the subject matter that applicant surrendered* during the prosecution (i.e., the method of treating the bread

dough to remove seed contaminants, absent the "101 and 115° C." and 5-15° C." temperature limitations).

The narrowing aspect of reissue claim 2 (requiring a "vacuum") relates to a prior art rejection because, during the prosecution of the patent, applicant added the dough collection limitation (d) in an effort to overcome reference Z. The narrowing does not, however, relate to the prior art rejection which applicant dealt with in the original prosecution by adding the "101 and 115° C." and 5-15° C." temperature limitations (thereby making the temperature limitation surrender). Accordingly, the narrowing limitation cannot save claim 2 from the recapture doctrine.

Since recapture exists, claim 2 should be rejected under 35 U.S.C. 251 as being a recapture.

See *In re Clement*, 131 F.3d 1464, 45 USPQ2d 1161 (Fed. Cir. 1997).

**Example 5- The reissue both broadens and narrows by newly presenting a separate species-Yes recapture**

Original prosecution:

The original application claim recited:

Claim 1: A bread containing chocolate, pepper, and tomatoes, which provide a unique taste to the bread.

The specification disclosed that citrus fruit peels provide added texture to the bread. Examples were provided in the specification where "orange peel" and "lemon peel" are used for texture. Note, however, that citrus fruit peels were not included as a component of the only claim in the case.

In the amendment replying to the Office action, applicant added "orange peels" to claim 1. Applicant argued that "orange peels" define the claim over references X and Y, because the orange peels make the bread sweeter. The amended claim recited:

Claim 1 (once amended): A bread containing chocolate, pepper, tomatoes and orange peel, which provide a unique taste to the bread.

Reissue proceedings:

In a reissue application, new claim 2 is presented for a bread containing chocolate, pepper, lemon peel and tomatoes, which provide a unique taste to the bread. The lemon peel is argued to provide softness to the bread. This reissue claim (claim 2) does not contain the "orange peel" that defined over references X and Y in the application. It does, however, require "lemon peel." Both "orange peel" and "lemon peel" are disclosed species of "citrus fruit peel," and the inclusion of a claim to the second disclosed species (the "lemon peel") was overlooked in the prosecution of the patent. Such constitutes "error" upon which reissue may be based. The examiner determines that newly presented claim 2 defines over references X and Y, and the remainder of the art, based upon the "lemon peel."

Resolution of the recapture issue:

**Claim 2 is barred by recapture.** The limitation omitted in the reissue is "orange peel," and omission of "orange peel" is related to subject matter surrendered in the original application. The presence of the "orange peel" limitation and the resultant sweetness argued in the original application became an integral part of the claim, and a bread absent the "orange peel" limitation and the resultant sweetness has been surrendered. Claim 2 has the alternative species "lemon peel," but it omits the "orange peel" limitation with its resultant sweetness. Accordingly, even though claim 2 is narrower in that it requires the lemon peel limitation, there is impermissible recapture, and claim 2 should be rejected under 35 U.S.C. 251, as such.

**CONSULTING T.C. SPRE IN CASE OF DOUBT**

The above examples provide guidance in common fact situations involving recapture issues which may arise. Where variants of these fact situations arise for which the examiner is unsure of their resolution, the Special Program Examiner(s) of the Technology Centers should be consulted.

Cc: Nicholas P. Godici  
Edward R. Kazenske  
Bruce Kisliuk





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
Patent and Trademark Office

Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS  
Washington, D.C. 20231

APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED APPLICANT	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
08/573,561	12/15/95	REASONER	M 65 748-002-T

HAROLD W MILTON JR  
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35M1/1202

EXAMINER

LUONG, V  
ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3502

DATE MAILED:

12/02/96

This is a communication from the examiner in charge of your application.  
COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS

EXHIBIT # 1  
H

OFFICE ACTION SUMMARY

☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 3/8/96

☐ This action is FINAL.

☒ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 D.C. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expire 3 (three) month(s), or thirty days, whichever is longer, from the mailing date of this communication. Failure to respond within the period for response will cause the application to become abandoned. (35 U.S.C. § 133). Extensions of time may be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.36(a).

Disposition of Claims

☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.

Of the above, claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.

☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.

☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.

☐ Claims \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

Application Papers

☒ See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.

☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to by the Examiner.

☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.

☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

☐ All ☐ Some ☐ None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been

☐ received.

☐ received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_

☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

☒ Notice of Reference Cited, PTO-892

☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s) 4

☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413

☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948

☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152

— SEE OFFICE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES —

Art Unit: 3502

1. Claims 1-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

It is unclear whether:

(a) a confusing variety of terms such as: (1) "a motion transmitting core element" and "a flexible motion transmitting core element" in claim 1; (2) "first and second conduit sections" in claim 1 and "first and second telescoping members" in claim 2; and (3) "an abutment" in claim 3 and "a locking member" in claim 5 refer to the same or different structures. See MPEP 608.01(o);

(b) applicant claims an apparatus (a motion transmitting core element) *per se*, or a process of use. See, e.g., "so that" clause in claim 3;

(c) applicant claims an apparatus (a motion transmitting core element) *per se*, or a process of assembly. See, e.g., claims 2, 3 and 8; and

(d) the recitation "characterized by" signifies "comprising" or "consisting of".

The term such as "movable" in claim 6 is indefinite in the sense that things which may be done are not required to be done, e.g., the retainer is movable, but not required structurally to be moved.

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs

Art Unit: 3502

of 35 U.S.C. § 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --  
(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1-7, as best understood, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Dickirson (U.S. Patent No. 5,039,138).

Assuming *arguendo* that applicant claims an apparatus *per se*:

Regarding claim 1, Dickirson teaches an assembly comprising first and second conduit sections 22 and 26, a core element 24, 28, adjustment components 30 interconnecting the conduit sections 22 and 26, and a spring 42, 242 interacting with components 30. *Ibid.*, line 4 *et seq.* of column 5, claims 1-16, and Figs. 6-10B.

Applicant's claim 1 is "fully met" by Dickirson. The functional statement cannot serve to distinguish claims, which are not process claims, from reference since it does not define any structure. *In re Mason*, 114 USPQ 127 (CCPA 1957).

Regarding claim 2, the components 30 include first and second telescoping members 34 and 36, and a retainer 38, 238 for retaining the spring 42, 242.

Regarding claim 3, see an abutment 220.

Regarding claim 4, see female and male members 34 and 36.

Art Unit: 3502

Regarding claim 5, see adjustment teeth 58 (Fig. 6) along the male member 36 and a locking member 220, 230 supported by the female member 34 for engaging the teeth 58 (Fig. 9).

Regarding claim 6, the locking member 220, 230 includes a tunnel (unnumbered in, e.g., Fig. 6) therethrough, the retainer 38, 238 is movable therethrough (Fig. 9). See *In re Mason*, *supra*.

Regarding claim 7, see complementary keyways defined by interfitting shapes (squared cross sections) of the end fitting 238 and 240 in Fig. 6. *Ibid.*, line 65 *et seq.* of column 4.

4. Claims 8-16 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112 and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

5. As allowable subject matter has been indicated, applicant's response must either comply with all formal requirements or specifically traverse each requirement not complied with. See 37 CFR 1.111(b) and MPEP § 707.07(a).

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure: Reasoner (Fig. 5), Cunningham (telescopic members 19 and 22), Perry (male and female members 50 and 52), Ruhlman (telescopic members 20 and 58 in Fig. 6), Simon (Fig. 1), Spease *et al.* (Fig. 14), Boike (male and female members 20 and 18), LeVahn (Fig. 7), and Jaksic (spring 23) are cited.

Serial Number: 08/573,561

-5-


Art Unit: 3502

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Examiner Luong whose telephone number is (703) 308-3221. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday-Friday from 7:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Charles Marmor, can be reached on (703) 308-2168. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 305-3598.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-2168.

Luong

November 26, 1996

  
VINH T. LUONG  
PRIMARY EXAMINER  
ART UNIT 352

6P3502  
6/9  
R  
1-234

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of: Michael Reasoner

Serial No.: 08/573,561

Group Art Unit: 3502

Filed: 12/15/95

Examiner: Vinh T. Luong

For: CONDUIT SHORTENING ADJUSTMENT ASSEMBLY

AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

RECEIVED

JAN 22 1997

GROUP 3500

Dear Sir:

In response to the Official Action dated 12/02/96, please amend the application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

a'

1. (Amended) A motion transmitting remote control assembly (10) [of the]  
type for transmitting motion in a curved path[ by a motion transmitting core element],  
said assembly comprising:

first (14) and second (16) conduit sections:

a flexible motion transmitting core element (12) movably supported in said  
conduit sections:

EXHIBIT # 2

adjustment components (18,20) interconnecting said first and second conduit sections (14, 16) and in telescoping relationship with each other for adjusting the overall length of said first and second conduit sections;

[said assembly characterized by] a coil spring (22) interacting [with] in tension between said adjustment components (18, 20) to bias said components together to shorten the overall length of said first and second conduit sections (14, 16).

a<sup>1</sup>  
ant  
2. (Amended) An assembly as set forth in claim 1 including [wherein said adjustment components include first (14) and second (16) telescoping members,] a retainer (24) for retaining said spring (22) in compression on one of said telescoping members [during assembly thereof].

3. (Amended) An assembly as set forth in claim 2 wherein said adjustment components include an abutment (19) for reacting with said spring (22) in place of said retainer (24) [upon assembly of said telescoping members so that] to bias said telescoping members [are biased] together in the direction to shorten the overall length of said conduit sections.

a<sup>2</sup>  
2  
6. (Amended) An assembly as set forth in claim 5 wherein said locking member (19) includes a tunnel (30) extending therethrough for receiving[,] said retainer (24) [being movable] through said tunnel (30) during telescoping movement of said male and female members (18 and 20) in the conduit lengthening direction to allow said abutment on said locking member (19) to react with said spring (22).

a<sup>3</sup>  
8. (Amended) An assembly as set forth in claim 7 wherein said spring (22) [is a coil spring (22)] spiraled around said male member (18) and includes[ing] an annular

a-3  
w-3  
collar (26) reacting axially between said retainer (24) and said spring (22) [during assembly] and for reacting between said spring (22) and said locking member (19) [during adjustment of the overall length of said conduit sections].

#### REMARKS

Claims 1 through 16 remain in the application, claim 1 being the only independent claim.

The claims have been amended to avoid the section 112 rejections by basically deleting objectionable language. However, it is respectfully submitted that the claim language is proper as function is allowed by the statute to distinguish claims over the prior art. Nonetheless, the claims do structurally distinguish over the prior art.

The prior art is simply devoid of any suggestion of employing a spring in a telescoping conduit of a remote control assembly to urge the conduit sections together. In all prior art systems the conduit sections are urged apart.

Therefore, claim 1 has been amended to more clearly bring out this distinction and to incorporate limitations indicated as allowable by the Examiner. More specifically, the Examiner indicated claims 8-16 to be allowable thereby indicating the limitations of claim 8 setting forth patentable subject matter. The important limitation in claim 8 which more specifically defines the invention is the "coil" spring. Claim 1 has been amended to include the coil spring and that it is in tension between the adjustment components (18, 20) to bias the components together to shorten the overall length of the first and second conduit sections (14, 16). The coil spring in tension is structure and none of the prior art suggest this combination.



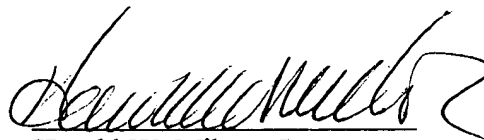
The patent to Dickirson '138 is not remotely suggestive of the subject invention because it merely discloses a snap-together assembly which is held together by nut 242 having flexible projections 244 which dig into the inner component. There is absolutely no coil spring in tension to urge the telescoping components into one another in Dickirson '138.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Application, as amended, is now presented in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully solicited. Further and favorable reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action is hereby requested.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge our Deposit Account No. 08-2789 for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,

**HOWARD & HOWARD ATTORNEYS, P.C.**



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Date: December 23, 1996  
HWM/mmk